

ECOSYSTEM STATUS INDICATORS

Benthic Communities and Non-target Fish Species

ADF&G Gulf of Alaska Trawl Survey

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The Alaska Department of Fish and Game continued its trawl survey for crab and groundfish in 2005. The 400 Eastern trawl net is targeted on areas of soft substrate around Kodiak Island, the Alaska Peninsula, and the Eastern Aleutian Islands. While the survey covers a large portion of the central and western Gulf of Alaska, results from Kiliuda and Ugak Bays and the immediately contiguous Barnabas Gully (Figure 73) are broadly representative of the survey results across the region. These areas have been surveyed continuously since 1984, and Ugak Bay was also the subject of an intensive trawl survey in 1976 (Blackburn 1977). Ugak Bay continues to be a very different place than it was in 1976. Red king crabs were once a main component of the catch, but now are nearly non-existent. Tanner crab, flathead sole, and walleye pollock catch rates have all increased roughly 10-fold.

Arrowtooth flounder are the main component of the offshore catches, while flathead sole comprise the largest catch in the bays (Figure 74). Tanner crab catch increased in the offshore stations, despite a commercial fishery in the area for the last 5 years. Tanner crab catch in the bays declined by 50% despite the fact Ugak and Kiliuda were closed for the January 2004 fishery and Ugak Bay was closed for the 2005 fishery. The 2005 gadid catch (94% walleye pollock) declined in Barnabas Gully but is still the highest catch since 1989.

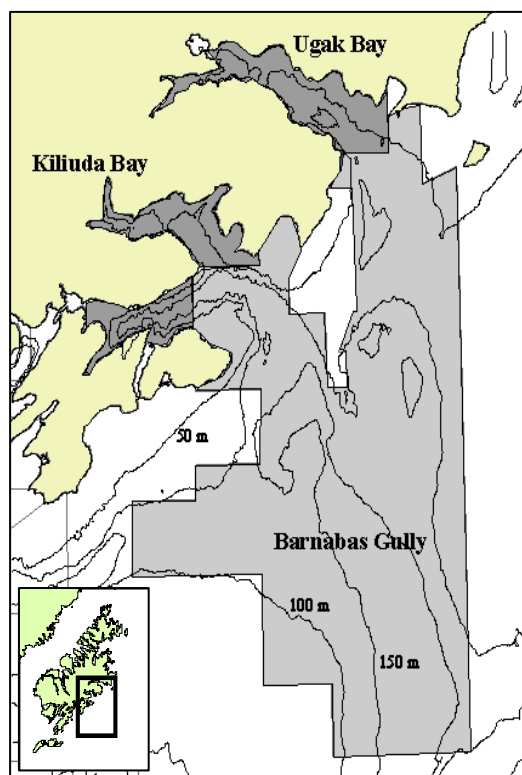


Figure 73. Adjoining survey areas on the east side of Kodiak Island used to characterize nearshore (dark gray, 14 stations) and offshore (light gray, 35 stations) trawl survey results. The 50, 100, and 150 m depth contours are shown.

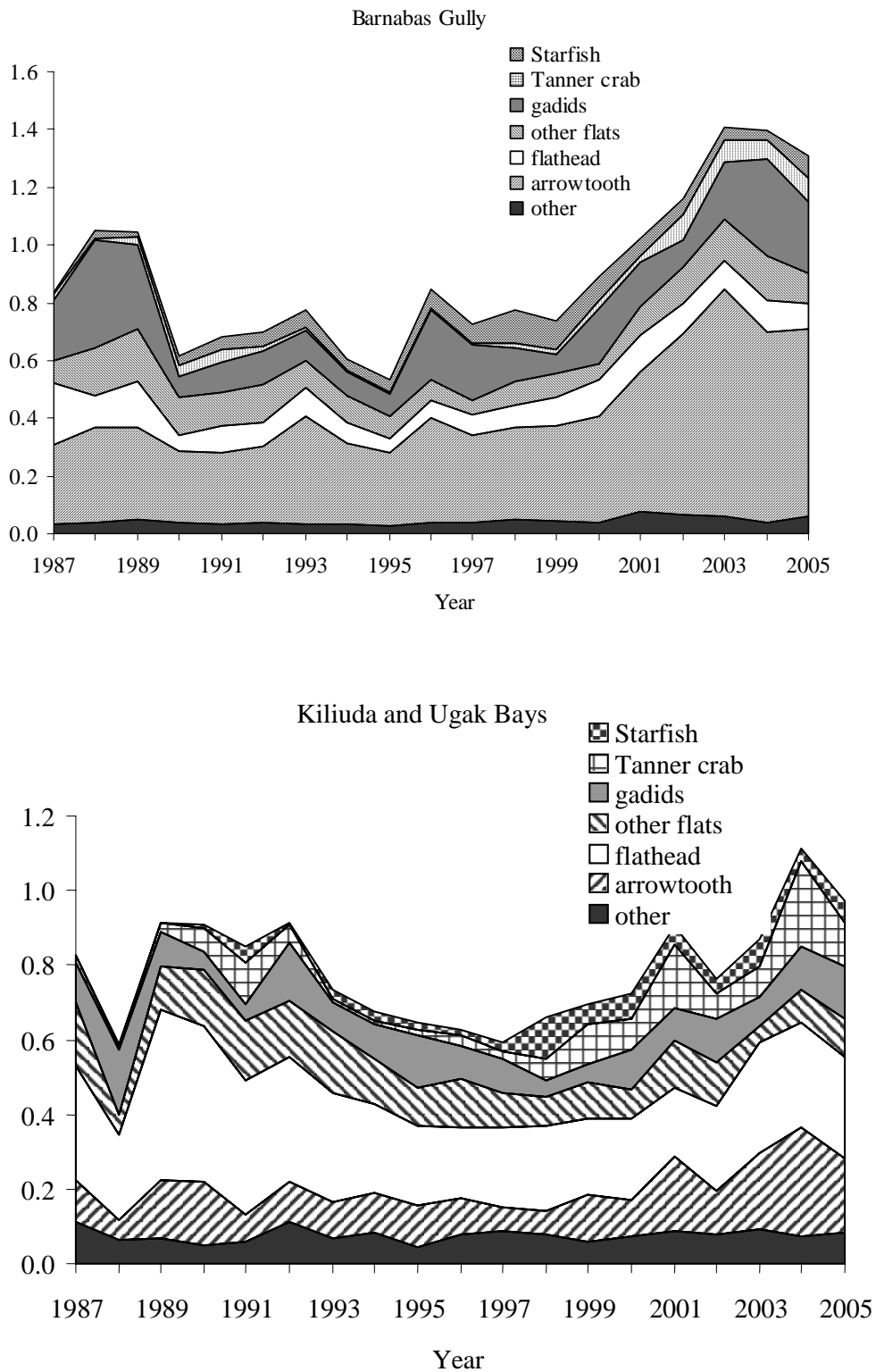


Figure 74. Metric tons per kilometer caught from 1987 to 2005 during the ADF&G large mesh trawl survey from adjacent areas off the east side of Kodiak Island.